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composition and have a particle size in the range of 0.5 mm to 30 mm and a thickness in the range of 1.0  $\mu\text{m}$  to 400  $\mu\text{m}$ . Such a planar structure displays a smooth plain surface without the need of any grinding step. Moreover, the incorporation of such flakes enables a broad variety of designing and patterning, particularly the development of a distinctively, coarsely patterned "spotting structure."

**In the Specification**

On page 1, before Description, please insert the following:

**REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION**

A2

This application claims the benefit, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §119, of the filing date of European Application No. 00 116 317.9-2113, filed July 27, 2000.

On page 1, starting at line 1, please amend as follows:

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The present invention relates to a linoleum-based planar structure a process for the preparation of such a planar structure as well as the use of the planar structure, for example, as a floor covering. The linoleum-based planar structure according to the present invention is particularly characterized by containing over the whole cross section flakes comprising an organic polymeric material, the flakes being compatible with the linoleum base composition and having a particle size in the range of 0.5 to 30 mm and a thickness in the range of 1.0 to 400  $\mu\text{m}$ . Such a planar structure according to the present invention displays a smooth plain surface without the need of any grinding step. Moreover, the incorporation of such flakes enables a broad variety of designing and patterning, particularly the development of a distinctively, coarsely patterned "spotting structure".

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Planar structures like floor coverings based on linoleum comprise a Bedford cement (abbreviated to "B cement") made from a partially oxidized linseed oil, at least one resin as tackifier and at least one filler, such as softwood flour and/or ground cork (if wood flour and ground cork are both present, the weight ratio is typically 90:10) and/or chalk, kaolin (China clay) and barites, and at least one pigment, such as titanium dioxide and other conventional colorants based on inorganic and organic dyes. A typical linoleum base composition consists of, based on the weight of the wear layer, about 40% by weight of binder, about 30% by weight of organic fillers, about 20% by weight of inorganic (mineral) fillers and about 10% by weight of colorants.

On page 3, starting at line 21, please amend as follows:

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Therefore, it is an object of the present invention to provide a linoleum based planar structure that has a more distinctively and more coarsely patterned "spotting structure" and displays a smooth plain surface without the need of any grinding step. Moreover, it is an object of the present invention to provide a process for the preparation of such a planar structure which enables a broad variety of designing and patterning and can be easily carried out in an economically advantageous manner.

On page 4, starting at line 14, please amend as follows:

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Moreover, such a planar structure according to the present invention displays a smooth plain surface without the need of any grinding step. Further, the incorporation of such flakes enables a broad variety of designing and patterning, particularly the development of a more